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ABSTRACT

There are some four million children of immigrants in nursery, primary, secondary, and vocational schools in the European Community. In particular the children of migrant workers experience significant educational difficulties. They often face an unfamiliar educational system and are handicapped by a lack of knowledge of the host country's language. As a result of inadequate schooling, they are disproportionally represented in the number of unemployed persons who are 16 to 25 years old. Proposals to improve the schooling of migrant children include: (1) increasing their knowledge of the language and culture of the host country; (2) expanding their knowledge of the language and culture of their country of origin; (3) intercultural education; (4) educational reintegration; (5) development of teaching materials; and (6) teacher training. An evaluation of the programs reveals that crash courses in languages followed by staged integration with native pupils is preferred to teaching only the language of origin or the host language. Teaching the mother tongue actually was a disadvantage to the migrant students in normal schooling because they missed regular classes to concentrate on their native language. Involvement of immigrant parents in their children's education was seen as a priority goal. The most successful pilot projects were found to be those that used intercultural courses that involved all the children in a class. The report concludes that school life should, ideally, offer equal opportunities and become the model for a pluralistic society open to evolutionary change. (SM)

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DOSSIER

THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS

There are some four million children of immigrants in nursery, primary, secondary and vocational schools in the Community of twelve. The guaranteed freedom of labour movement within the Member States, the recruitment of non-European workers to fill manpower shortfalls during the economic boom of the 1950's and 1960's and immigration from former colonies have given rise to the relocation of millions of men, women and children. Now immigrant communities are taking on the characteristics of a permanent feature in the host countries. The issue is no longer one of population movements but rather of the integration of foreigners or people of foreign origin.

BETWEEN TWO SCHOOLS?

The children of migrant workers experience particular educational difficulties whether they be first time arrivals or born within the host country; either dealing with culture shock or problems of identity. In school they often face an unfamiliar educational system, a feeling of displacement, racial tension and may be handicapped by a total lack of knowledge of the host country's language. Recent statistics show that ethnic minority children and adolescents in mainstream education fall behind in school progress more often than indigenous pupils. Immigrant children are over-represented in those forms of schooling that lead to the more badly paid and less prestigeous jobs, also they obtain fewer and poorer leaving qualifications. As a result, they constitute an above average proportion of young unemployed in the 16 to 25 age group. The problem of inserting this group into the world of work and adult life is of great concern to the Commission which has identified inadequate schooling of immigrant children as a cause of disadvantage.

COMMUNITY POLICY

In the Council Resolution of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education, the education of migrant workers' children was declared to be one of the priorities of Community action in this field. A Council Directive on the same theme addressed to the Member States in 1977 made provision for the reception and education of migrant workers' children to permit integration of such children into the educational environment of host countries. The Commission presented the Council with "Guidelines for a Community Migration

Policy" in 1985, based on updated information, which proposed the social and occupational promotion of the children of foreign extraction. Special effort in the areas of pre-school and school education and the transition from compulsory education to vocational training and working life was recommended in this document.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Under the 1976 Resolution, the Commission was given a mandate to carry out educational pilot schemes to compare and assess certain aspects of the education of immigrant children. The inception of this "Action Programme in the Field of Education" was an attempt to initiate innovation in the Member States by means of selective support and to examine the possibility of generalizing whatever findings were made, with a view to wider application. The pilot schemes can be grouped into six main categories:

- Reception teaching;
- Teaching of the language and culture of origin;
- Intercultural education;
- Educational reintegration;
- Development and assessment of teaching materials;
- Teacher training.

Within this Community framework, there are many national schemes and cooperative ventures, some ongoing, others recently completed; they include:

Reception teaching: Its aim is to introduce migrant pupils to the language and culture of the host country. One example is a scheme set up in October 1984 with the assistance of the Belgian Ministry of Dutch language schools in Brussels which experimented with trilingual (Dutch, French, Mother Tongue) teaching as a reponse to the problems faced by the immigrants. The Netherlands has run schemes dealing with the new arrivals of Turkish and Maroccan children while Luxembourg has worked on the reception of Italian and Portuguese pupils. In Spain progress has been made on a project concerning Gypsy children of Portuguese nationality and Denmark and France are initiating pre-school pilot schemes.

The teaching of the language and culture of the country of origin: This tuition allows the retention of the linguistic links and cultural heritage of the immigrant population. Pilot schemes in this area were concerned with mother tongue and intercultural teaching in primary and secondary schools.

The problems of continuity between primary and secondary level education were studied in Limbourg (Belgium). Here, the immigrants' mother tongues have the status of foreign languages in secondary schools and are optional subjects in vocational schools. Limbourg included intercultural courses aimed at all students. Also the Belgian-French speaking Ministry of Education has initiated a programme in mother tongue teaching accompanied by remedial tuition in French. Multi-cultural classes have been made a feature of the curriculum in several schools.

Since 1982, Copenhagen has run a scheme involving the foreign pupils in the last three years of primary and lower secondary school. Educational and vocational guidance was offered to the students, and mother tongue teachers played an important role in contacts with immigrant families. This scheme was extended to young apprentices in 1985. Generally, immigrant children are required to learn English as their first compulsory foreign language and the mother tongue is regarded as an optional subject.

In Amsterdam, a scheme initiated by the "Witte Leli" Institute was geared towards making lower secondary education (LBO) more accessable to students of non-Dutch origin and to determine the role of the mother tongue in vocational education. It was found that there was a particular

Eurydice
News
N° 3
May '87

problem in the teaching of the more technical subjects for students whose first language was not Dutch. As a result, over four thousand pages of teaching material were rewritten, with reference to Arabic and Turkish technical terminology, and are currently being tested in the schools.

In the United Kingdom, several educational authorities have started courses in Italian, Greek, Urdu and Punjabi to accomodate immigrant students. These languages form part of the normal curriculum. The Education Institute of the University of London has been coordinating the teaching of mother tongues as living languages since 1982.

Pilot projects have been completed in Paris and Marseille, experimenting with the teaching of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Serbo-Croat, between 1976 and 1982. The languages were taught at primary school level.

Educational reintegration: In response to a request from the Ministry of Education in Greece a pilot scheme has been activated to develop educational methods and structures to ensure that Greek children, whose parents have returned home, can be easily reintegrated into Greek schools. Three objectives were fixed: improving the childrens' knowledge of Greek, adaptation of knowledge acquired in the host country to the Greek educational curricula and further tuition in the language of the country of emigration. The Universities of Athens and Ioannina are assisting in this project.

Development and assessment of teaching materials: As a result of the collaboration of several countries, especially those with immigrant/emigrant links, specific teaching aids, suitable for use by migrants' children have been developed. A project to create a series of textbooks for Italian primary school pupils

DOSSIER

in France, French-speaking Belgium and Luxembourg has been completed. The textbooks entitled "TRA NOI" are accompanied by teachers' manuals, games to test what has been learned and information sheets. Audiovisual packages with a cultural content have been designed by the Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, which was in charge of the project. In 1985, the Institute started work on a similar project for Italian children in German-speaking countries and regions, adapted to the German educational system and the situation of Italians in Germany.

Greek and German authorities have collaborated on a project producing curricular and extracurricular material for use in German schools. The Greek Education Ministry introduced resources units; sets of books and audio tapes for Greek students aged 9 to 14 years. A magazine "AEROSTATO", aimed at the same target group, is now published and proving popular.

The Education Institute of London University and the Ecole Normale de Paris-Batignolles have co-produced a multicultural music educational package. Songs, music and dances of immigrants and the regions of Europe have been compiled on a set of fifty-two cassettes. The tapes, produced as part of European Music Year, are aimed at children aged between 3 and 9 years, introducing them to the rhythms and music of other culture. Also, in the United Kingdom progress has been made on course design in Community languages and teaching materials for the children of Irish migrant workers.

The Ministry of Education in Berlin, with the support of the Federal German Government and the Commission, has produced teaching material for Turkish language and culture tuition in secondary schools. Each textbook in the series is accompanied by a full German translation.

Distribution of information and teaching materials: In 1979 the Linguistic Minorities Project (LMP) was set up at the Institute of Education, University of London, funded by the Department of Education and Science. Its function was to investigate patterns of bilingualism in different parts of England, and to assess the educational implications of linguistic diversity. In January 1981 the Commission-funded Language Information Network Co-ordination (LINC) project was attached to the LMP with two broad aims: to disseminate the research of the LMP at local and national levels in England (and where feasable at European level); and to develop a model for research dissemination which could be adapted to other European settings. The LINC project ended in December 1984. Both projects played an important part in making educators aware of the multicultural and multilingual makeup of the school populations in large towns.

Teacher training: An educational structure involving constantly adapting teaching practices in the Community cannot be achieved without initial and in-service teacher training. Towards this end the University of Nottingham, in 1985, experimented with training units designed for those educators responsible for immigrant children. The French Ministry of Education has initiated a scheme in eight regions of France to give multicultural training to teachers dealing with immigrant and gypsy children. Italian teachers working in France, Belgium and Germany are receiving instruction on intercultural teaching methods. The pedagogical Academy in Amsterdam runs in-service training courses for the school staff involved in the pilot projects.

EVALUATING THE PRESENT SITUATION

The Commission is constantly evaluating the changing situation in the area of immigrant education, through its own efforts and with the assistance of organizations such as the 'Ausbildung von Lehrern für Ausländerkinder' (ALFA), le 'Centre de Recherche et d'Etude pour la Diffusion du Français' (CREDIF) and the 'Centre de Recherche en Sciences Sociales' (LARESSO).
These groups have been given the task of assessing and comparing the pilot schemes and making critical studies of their development.
In addition a group of experts was established with a permanent scientific secretariat. The group will involve themselves in the workings of the pilot projects and will act as an analysis unit, disseminating the results of their findings.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION - THE WAY AHEAD

One comparative study, made by the ALFA group between April and June 1980, on behalf of and with the support of the Commission, evaluated pilot schemes in Belgium, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands. This report finds that national educational systems often lag behind Community instruments. It stresses the need of a more coordinated development of national schemes carefully and flexibly linked so that cross fertilization of ideas and the pooling of experience can take place.

The first attempts at reception teaching were criticized as being one dimensional and characterized by an assumption that a spectrum of problems could be solved by language instruction alone. A danger of creating a base for 'expectations of underachievement' could arise when immigrant children were segregated for reception teaching. The report suggests that crash courses in languages followed by staged integration with indigenous pupils is the preferred course.

In the area of mother tongue language tuition, the ALFA group argues that the teaching of these languages should be an educational provision relating to the pupils

life in the host country, rather than geared towards the preservation of a way of life governed by inherited norms and values, or the possibility of repatriation. The status and timetabling of mother tongue languages posed several problems. Either the immigrant pupil was disadvantaged in normal schooling by missing regular classes or forfeited less academic pursuits, such as art or sports. Generally indigenous children, unburdened by these extra classes made better progress.

The involvement of the immigrant parents in their children's education was seen as a priority. The bi-lingual teachers played an important role in the creation of the home-school link. The status of the mother tongue languages and the teachers was often uncertain and contact between pilot scheme staff and regular staff was not as close as it could have been. However, it was found that if the mother tongue language teaching is given full status it can combat discrimination in that it provides a clear indication that the language and culture of the immigrants is recognized as having the same value as those of the host country.

The most successful pilot projects were found to be those that used intercultural courses which involved all the children in a class. Both immigrants and indigenous children were able to study each others cultures. This created a degree of sensitivity to ethnic minorities and lessened the stigmatization of minority cultural groups. Immigrant children were seen to gain confidence and a sense of their own cultural value from these classes, while the indigenous children enjoyed first hand information of other countries and lifestyles.

The report concludes that school life should, ideally, offer equal opportunities and become the model for a pluralist society open to evolutionary change.

It is clear that, after the initial pilot projects, it is time to draw together the various strands of experience gained and to develop agreed policies for the education of migrant children in Europe. The education of these children cannot be viewed in isolation, many socio-economic and informal factors must be taken into consideration.

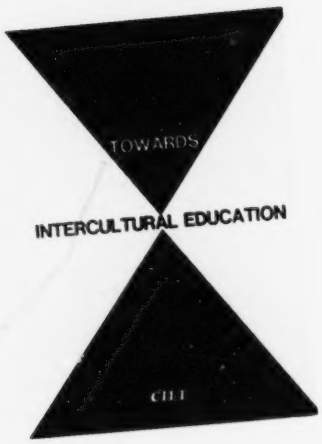
Only when concrete and all encompassing action is taken by the Member States as a whole will the special needs of immigrant children be catered for and their academic performance improved thus increasing their level of opportunities in the job market.

The Commission together with the pertinent national authorities has held several European colloquia concerning the pilot projects, these include Copenhagen and Berlin in 1985, and Amsterdam and Pont-à-Mousson in 1986. These have proved to be valuable forum for debate and evaluation. The next European seminars will be held in the Belgian Limbourg in April 1987 and in the United Kingdom in the Autumn of 1987.

NP3
May '87

DOSSIER

A SELECTION OF REPORTS AND TEACHING MATERIALS RESULTING FROM THE MIGRANTS PROGRAMME



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